

CLAIMS:

1. A hand truck for transporting a load, the hand truck comprising a sub-frame with a foot portion extending therefrom so that the sub-frame is able to support the load, a main frame engaged with the sub-frame such that the sub-frame is able to be extended and retracted with respect to a lower end of the main frame, at least one wheel secured relative to the main frame so that the truck is able to be wheeled about, a motor, a controller coupled to the motor for enabling a user to control the operation of the motor, and a flexible linkage coupling the motor, main frame and sub-frame together such that the motor is operable to move the linkage to thereby extend or retract the sub-frame.
2. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the sub-frame includes a pair of side rails and at least one cross member extending between the side rails.
3. The hand truck of claim 1 or 2, wherein the sub-frame includes an extension which is selectively extendable relative to the rest of the sub-frame to thereby lengthen the sub-frame.
4. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the main frame includes a pair of side rails and at least one cross member extending between the side rails.
5. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the main frame includes a handle.
6. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the sub-frame is telescopically received by the main frame.
7. The hand truck of claim 1 further comprising selectively engagable wheel brakes for inhibiting rotation of the wheels.
8. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the motor is an electric motor.
9. The hand truck of claim 1 further including a gearbox which is driven by the motor.
10. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the controller is a switch.
11. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the flexible linkage is a roller chain.
12. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein one end of the flexible linkage is secured relative to the main frame, and another end of the linkage is secured relative to the sub-frame.
13. The hand truck of claim 1, wherein the flexible linkage is configured as an

endless linkage and is secured relative to the main frame or the sub-frame.

14. The hand truck of claim 12, wherein the flexible linkage is trained around a rotatable member which is driven either directly or indirectly by the motor, and is also trained around another rotatable member secured relative to the main frame or the sub-frame.

15. The hand truck of claim 13, wherein the flexible linkage is trained around a rotatable member which is driven either directly or indirectly by the motor, and is also trained around another rotatable member secured relative to the main frame or the sub-frame.

16. The hand truck of claim 14, wherein each rotatable member is a sprocket or an idler pulley.

17. The hand truck of claim 1 further comprising a spring which is secured to the sub-frame and the flexible linkage so as to take up slack in the flexible linkage.

18. The hand truck of claim 1 further comprising safety switches that are operable to control the motor to prevent excessive extension or retraction of the sub-frame.

19. The hand truck of claim 1 further including a weight sensor for sensing if the weight of the load carried by the truck is excessive.

20. The hand truck of claim 19 further including a safety switch operable by the weight sensor to prevent the motor from retracting and extending the sub-frame if the weight sensor senses that the weight of the load is excessive.